



HEATHMOOR OF LONDON

A work of fiction

By

Donald Harry Roberts

Season One

Episode

One

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LONDON TOWN STORIES BY DONALD

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THE MYSTERY OF MASON MOTH

Chapter One

I must begin with the first time I met Mr. Rooklyn Heathmoor, which was a rather clandestine approach initiated by himself.

I ordered coffee and muffin at my usual morning coffee haunt. When it was served it include a calling card. "A fellow left this for you last night." Said the server.

The calling card read simply, Heathmoor Of London. heathmooroflondon.lt

On the back in cursory was written, Donald, please join me at the Richmond Tavern this evening 7pm. RH.

"Heathmoor. Heathmoor." I thought. "I've heard the name before." I said out loud but could not recall where. Nonetheless, curiosity grabbed be by my imagination tendrils and that evening I deposited myself at a table near the bar at the Richmond Tavern. Upon ordering a draft, ale, the bartender nodded, but not at me. I turned, glancing over my shoulder, to see who he had addressed.

The best way I could describe the man who called himself, Heathmoor of London would be by comparison. Imagine if you will a photograph of a Canadian born fellow by the name of Bat Masterson, Henryville, Que. I am sure you have heard the name in many tales of the American old west. The likeness was so astonishing, including the familiar bowler hat and mustache I was tempted to make the observation in some humourous manner, but I refrained from doing so immediately upon officially making his acquaintance. I might add here that at first glance I remembered where I had come across the name before, in a fifth page byline concerning a ring of thieves working the city. It was brief and mechanical.

Heathmoor of London nodded at the bartender then turned his attention to me. With a wave he invited me to join him at his table, tucked a little out of the way from the main stream of patrons.

I was a little put aback when the first words out of his mouth were, "I will not be your Sherlock Holmes. That person is a fictional character, and you are certainly not Watson. Nor am I modest in any way. You will describe my exploits in the art of criminal investigation in a fashion becoming my skill, talent, and expertise, and with a generous flurry of drama. In short, Make Me Famous."

I thought about that and nearly took my leave of him, but, to my good wisdom, I did not. I realized by making himself famous I would reap the residual effects, possibly myself become a household name.

I said in good form, "I am at your service. Tell me your story."

"I have none at this moment to tell you, however, if you accompany me to my rooms on the penthouse floor of this building, 4-A, I assure you a story for your column will unfold. I am expecting a visitor at eight pm, sharp, I anticipate."

I asked a little more abruptly than I intended, "Why now and why me?"

Heathmoor answered with calm, "Now because I believe this intrigue will prove most exhilarating and I have been following your column, London Town Stories. You are more than adequate in your pursuits."

I shall declare now, that evening and at all times after, Mr. Heathmoor referred to me as Donald, no more, no less. I have often wondered if he even knew my surname, but that thought of course is absurd, given his nature. Any way better than something else diminutive or superior. It actually inspired me to change my byline to just that, Donald.

We finished our beer and retired to Heathmoor's rooms with windows that looked out over King and Richmond streets. The room we sat in was pie shaped and the window looked out over the intersection from corner to corner which afforded the viewer a curious panoramic view. This bit of information will explain itself in due time.

We sat at a table by a window that gave a clear view of the entire intersection. Mr. Heathmoor smoked his cigar contentedly and sipping strong coffee, saying nothing, just watching the street below. I busied my-

self with entering notes in my notepad laptop.

It was coming on to eight when Heathmoor sat up straight in his chair and announced casually, "And here is our visitor now, just entering the street door, exactly on time as I expected."

And as promised a story unfolded...

When the knock came to the door Heathmoor did not go to it. He held his chair and said in a loud enough voice to be heard, "Enter."

The door opened slowly creaking a little on its hinges.

The creature who stepped in was emphatically, the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. I suppose though in these sterile times such an observation would be mocked, but it was the absolute truth, and clad all in sky blue, with sapphire blue eyes and hair, black as midnight, streaked naturally with silver that caused me to think of the Milkyway reaching across a clear night sky.

I may have gasped since both she and Heathmoor shot me an glance that settled me to calm.

"Mr. Heathmoor?!" she said, glancing from myself to himself.

Heathmoor nodded, smiled plaintively and said, "That would be myself Madam."

Then he stood and went to her, escorting her to the table and the third chair which was turned slightly to face him.

She said in a shyly sort of way, "My name is Melissa Comridge. I have lost, or it has been taken, a gift given to me by my mother. Jewelry, a sapphire, necklace, bracelet, and anklet. I have also lost my fiancé."

Mr. Heathmoor grimaced.



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Then Heathmoor glanced at me and grinned. The next words out of his mouth annoyed me at first but ultimately...well, He said, "Tell me your story," which he borrowed from me and I probably borrowed from someone else.

Melissa Comridge stifled a sob, "I was such a fool, I think, but Mr. Moth was so, ah, dashing and seemed so sincere. He was always the complete gentleman.

We went on picnics and to very nice dinners with his friends, to the movies and theatre and a very nice cruise on the river. Sometimes in the best of weather we would go on the river in a rowing boat and have a picnic somewhere.

Mr. Moth never once made advances. When parting, only after several dates, he would kiss me gently on the cheek. So you see, I was taken in slowly and gently.

Sometimes he would go away on business, once he mentioned Paris and another time it was Istanbul, though he preferred its elder name, Constantinople and there were several more, always exotic, at least to me, and I must say I was completely dazzled by it all, especially when he brought me little gifts, never expensive but endearing."

Ms. Comridge paused a moment, taking a breath and collecting her thoughts. I could almost see the thoughts dancing in her eyes, at least the sadness that they brought her. Then finally she continued.

"But all was not well in one way. My sister Angela mooned over Mr. Moth incessantly, making his visits to our home most uncomfortable. He did as much as he could to avoid the conflict with out getting stern.

Of course Angela was always taunting me, reminding me that I am almost and old maid at thirty four, and she a much prettier and younger catch for the likes of Mr. Moth, whom, by the way is four years older than myself and widowed. I am afraid I grew angry one evening and slapped her rather viciously. It was in fact the last time I saw Mr. Moth and my sapphire ensemble. We were going out that evening to a particularly

elegant ball. That is why I wore my sapphire jewelry.

It was a most pleasant evening and Mr. Moth introduced me to several of his friends and business acquaintances. I think every woman in the room was making eyes at Mr. Moth and I believe I felt a little jealous and a little proud all at the same time that rivals were challenging my position. I realized then that I was falling in love with my suitor, if not already fallen. Dear, Dear Mason paid them little mind and focus warmly on me.

That evening he escorted me home and I think I had never been happier in my life and for the first and only time he took me in his arms and kissed me, deeply. Lovingly and maybe just a little passionately, which as you can imagine, put me over the top.

Of course Angela was home to interrupt the moment and laughed at me, in front of Mr. Moth. I could have done something terrible but Mason held my hand and said, "She is jealous my dear. Don't let it bother you. I am yours now and hopefully long into the future."

I believe, for Mr. Heathmoor, it was a prelude to a marriage proposal.

I removed my sapphire ensemble and put them on the mantle over the hearth in the drawing room. Mr. Moth saw me put them there but went no where near them and I

never left him alone. Besides he only remained long enough for a tea, which we took in the kitchen.

After he left I returned to the drawing room to retrieve the jewelry but my sapphires were gone.

I reported the disappearance to my mother the next morning and she called the police.

As I have said I have seen neither my sapphires or my fiancé since and the police have not been able to locate Mr. Moth. It seems he simply disappeared as well leaving behind his luggage and an unpaid bill at his hotel residence."

There was a long silence in the room. I could see that Mr. Heathmoor was in a deep state of thought, then he said, as if issuing orders, "I require the dates on which Mr. Moth visited Paris and Istanbul and any where else he went on his business travels.

I will need the address of his hotel residence and if you have access, the names of his business associates and friends, particularly of the female gender."

"I will get as many names and dates as I can find Mr. Heathmoor, but I can't imagine why you find them interesting." Ms. Comridge replied.

"You have come for my help. This is my way." Rooklyn Heathmoor replied.



CONTINUED NEXT WEEK AND EVERY TUESDAY THERE AFTER

TRAVIS LOCK AND: THE WIDOW'S KISS

By

Donald Harry Roberts

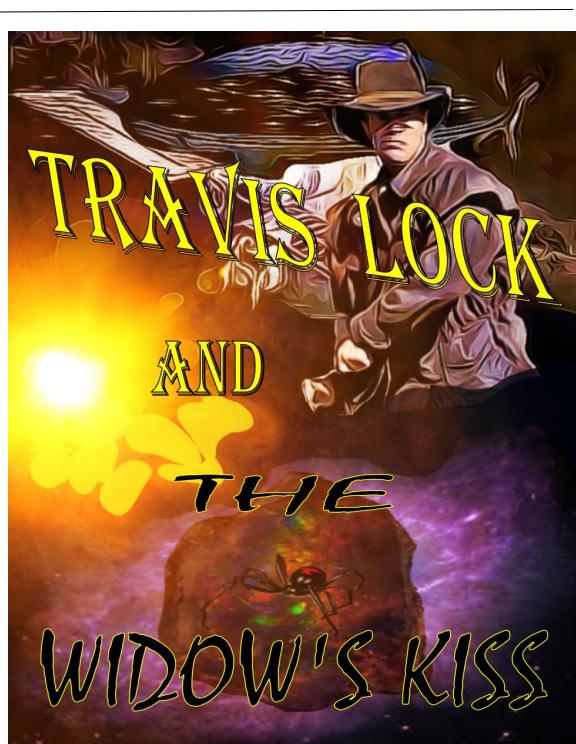
I tapped the light switch illuminating the reception part of my office.

Ida. My holosecretary flickered on, activated by the motion sensor. "Hey Boss. You're early." She greeted.

The door of my private office slid open and Jake, my AI leg man came through. "Ah Boss. Yah gotta shadow." He said secretively.

"I know." I answered, then turned around on one heel and put my hand on the AI's chest. It looked human. It felt human, but I could hear the faint hiss all AI's make.

The AI smirked and took two steps to the left giving way to another visitor. The real client, a short round character dressed up in an old-world gangster costume, cigar in one hand and a ring box in the other.



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STAY TUNE: NEXT WEEK/TUESDAY: EPISODE TWO

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Two

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Episode Two

Melissa Comridge sat there for a moment with a far away look in her eyes. Then she turned to me and said, "I read your column Donald. Will you be writing this incident up?"

I did not answer. She had gone back to addressing Mr. Heathmoor before I could respond.

"I can pay. I assume you charge for your services." She said abruptly.

"I do, if I decide a case intrigues me." Heathmoor replied a little evasively.

Ms. Comridge asked forcefully, "Will you take this one?"

I sensed Heathmoor was about ready to take her on. He was looking out the window, staring at something I could not see, or maybe he was staring inwardly. It was not always easy to tell.

Finally, he said. "Go home Ms. Comridge. You can email or text the lists I asked for. I will decide after reading them if I will take the case or not. Make sure you include the dates for Paris and Istanbul." Then he went back to his window while I saw the lady out.

When I rejoined him, he said, "Donald. There is a great deal more to this than that which concerns Ms. Comridge, and it is that which I may find intriguing enough to engage." TBC

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